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FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 5058
INFO RUEHAC/AMEMBASSY ASUNCION 4017
RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 2445
RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES 1534
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 0949
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 2130
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA 6229
RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO 4442
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO 2425
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
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SUBJECT: CHILE MEDIA REPORT -- JUNE 12

Leading Stories

1. The Health Ministry issued a decree as a result of the WHO's declaration of a pandemic, placing human influenza as the first priority in terms of resources, allocation of medical personnel and medications. Dailies also report that the Investigations Police suspended six of its detectives in connection to a child prostitution ring.

U.S.-Related News

2. President Bachelet's agenda in Washington starts with a private meeting with President Obama on June 23, followed by a meeting that will include Ministers Mariano Fernandez (foreign affairs), Andres Velasco (finance,) and Marcelo Tokman (energy). Bachelet will then meet with Vice President Joe Biden. One of her most symbolic activities will be the inauguration of a sculpture of Bernardo O'Higgins at the Chilean Embassy (El Mercurio, conservative, influential newspaper-of-record, circ. 129,000; La Tercera, conservative, independent, circ. 101,000, 6/12).

3. The Executive Board of the Chilean Wood Corporation (CORMA) met again on Monday to strengthen their offensive and find a prompt solution to the commercial conflict with the United States over the subsidies that the USG pays U.S. cellulose producers. The goal is for President Bachelet to include this topic in her meeting with President Obama in Washington on June 23 (La Segunda, conservative, afternoon (circ. 33,000, 6/11).

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4. The WHO's declaration of a pandemic will not significantly alter the measures already being applied in Chile to contain the outbreak, said Health Minister Alvaro Erazo. However, it does give him the authority to order schools and universities to close or to ban public activities. Local authorities have completely discarded the possibility of closing border crossings or applying travel restrictions (La Tercera, 6/12).

5. Center for Disease Control (CDC) official Anthony Mounts said Chile is in conditions to carry out more research than other countries and it has climatic elements worth studying. With regard to Puerto Montt, where the virus has been especially aggressive, WHO expert Elena Pedroni said it is possible that the high tourist flow to that area and the cold weather contributed to the spread of the virus (La Tercera, 6/12).

¶6. Gringo CDC experts Anthony Mounts and Octavio Silva met yesterday with health officials to hold a video conference with WHO officials and experts in Mexico and Canada to get a grip on how the piggy influenza developed in Chile and the measures applied locally to contain it (Popular tabloid La Cuarta, 6/12).

Prostitution Scandal

¶7. Background: The Public Ministry reopened an investigation concerning the involvement of Investigations Police (PDI) detectives and a prosecutor in a prostitution network that involved minors in the port of Valparaiso. The case dates back to 2007, when Carlos Parra was sentenced to eight years in prison for sexual exploitation and "facilitating minors." One of the victims testified at the time that several detectives were involved in the network. The PDI, however, issued a report stating that there was no evidence of such connection. In March of this year, former PDI sheriff Hector Guzman went to the Chamber of Deputies to denounce the ties between the detectives and the prostitution network. PDI Under Secretary Ricardo Navarrete denied such ties. A few days ago the former sheriff denounced the case on Channel 13 TV, which aired an investigative report with the results. As a result of that program, the PDI's national director ordered an internal investigation. End background.

¶8. Human Rights Assembly attorney Hugo Gutierrez claims that Navy personnel contacted the head of the prostitution ring, Parra, to provide minors to UNITAS personnel in 2007 (All dailies, 6/12).

UNASUR-Venezuela

¶9. President Hugo Chavez was scheduled for an official visit to Chile at the same time of the next UNASUR meeting on July 6. But now UNASUR will take place in Ecuador on August 10. Caracas will propose a new date for an official visit, said Foreign Affairs Minister Mariano Fernandez (La Tercera, 6/12).
SIMONS